Assistance to Kerala in IT

2980. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :—

(a) Whether the Kerala State Government has sought Rs. 447 crore assistance from the Centre to implement various Information Technology projects in the State; and

(b) if so, the details and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PROMOD MAHAJAN):

(a) No such proposal has been received.

(b) Does not arise.

New Technology for eradicating poverty

2981. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plans to harness newer technologies like infotech for eradicating poverty in our country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to meet the challenge of ever increasing number of Internet users, particularty in the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) :

(a) and (b) Harnessing of Information Technology (IT) is a continuous process. Some of the on-going efforts include:—

Computerisation of a variety of application right upto the district level supported by a nationwide computer network called NICNET.

Encouragement of all Central Ministries/Departments to spend upto 3% of their budget on IT.

Progressive emphasis by State and Central Governments to introduce governance, thus leading to increased efficiency and transparency.

In North Eastern Region, community information centres are being set up at all of the 486 blocks.

In education, use of computers have been promoted.

*in schools

*skills are being imparted to meet growing IT industry needs and

*on-line learning is being introduced to increase number of skilled manpower without degradation in quality.

A project to generate entrepreneurship through "Low cost multi-media content creation" launched.

A pilot village information centre (SAMADHAN CENTRE) project initiated at Tamil Nadu to provide information centres to 30-40 panchayats. This will provide information on public health, village level resource map, crop planning, soil conservation and fertility management and water resources planning in addition to imparting computer literacy to the community.

A unique "wired village" pilot project has been implemented at the Warana Nagar cooperative complex in Kolhapur district in Maharashtra.

Employment generation schemes in North East.

Encourage widespread use of Indian Language interface to computers.

Increasing the reach of computers and internet at various levels as also making it increasingly affordable.

All these and other measures taken will lead to employment generation, skills upgradation, resource optimization, instant and ready access to information without locational barrier.

(c) Government has implemented Internet Service Providers (ISPs) policy. No lincence fee is payable for first five years and nominal fee of one rupee is to be paid after five years. The policy provides for inter-connection of networks and setting up of international gateways and hiring of bandwidth by foreign satellites by the internet service providers independent of VSNL. Further, the infrastructure for Internet is proposed to be upgraded as below:—

Department of Telecom Services (DTS) is setting up national internet backbone in the country.

Internet Service Providers are allowed to set up last mile linkages freely by fibre optic or by radio communication.

The Internet access is also allowed through authorised cable TV.

The tariff for internet access has been recently reduced. DTS have recently offered 20% concession on rental for leased lines taken and used for internet applications. Students are being given one time concession on internet accounts

by DTS. Access to internet on local call basis from the nearest internet node has been provided throughout the country except in Andaman and Nicobar Island and Leh (J & K). The existing departmental Public Call Operators (PCO) and Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD) booths are proposed to be upgraded to public tele-info/cyber centres. These centres will provide multi-utility services such as internet, e-mail access and internet libraries.

Signing of MOUs to Promote Information Technology

2982. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has signed Menorandum of Understanding (MOU) with some countries with a view to promote information technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) yes, sir.

(b) and (c) : The Ministery of Information Technology, Government of India have, so far, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Ezypt, Bulgaria, Ireland, Hong Kong and Singapore for bilateral co-operation in various areas of Information Technology and Electronics. These MOUs are expected to boost bilateral cooperation as well as bilateral trade in the areas of internet.

Setting up of IIIT in Rajasthan

2983. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU) : Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has established the first Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) at Allahabad on the lines of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT);

(b) whether it is also a fact that the second similar IIIT has recently being opened at Gwalior at Madhya Pradesh;

(c) whether it is a fact that Rajasthan has sent a request long back for opening such an Institutes in Rajasthan offering land free of cost alongwith other facilities;